



The Judicial Branch News

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November 2010

New Adoption Record Set

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The *Judicial Branch News* is an online newsletter published by the Media Relations and Community Outreach Department. The newsletter is also available on the Court's Intranet site at:
<http://courts.maricopa.gov/publicInfo/newsLetter/index.asp>

If you wish to contribute to this newsletter, please send articles, news items, photos or other correspondence to:
karra@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov.

"Equal Justice Under Law"



Superior Court in Maricopa County broke its own National Adoption Day record.

During this year's event, 310 kids were adopted, breaking last year's nation-wide record of 278 adoptions.

"Without question this event generates more positive recognition for the courts and our legal system each year than any other. It is a great opportunity to showcase the many caring individuals and families in our county and most importantly reminds us all of the importance of caring for the most vulnerable children in our society," Presiding Judge Norman Davis said.

National Adoption Day helps raise public awareness about the plight of children without families. The children who range in age from newborns to teenagers are victims of neglect, abandonment and abuse.

The 2010 event was heightened by visits from the Phoenix Suns Gorilla, Scorch of the Phoenix Mercury, the Arizona Cardinals Big Red, Captain America, Spiderman and Santa Claus. The day also included face painting; games for kids; photos of the newly-created families and cake and ice cream.

A record number of judicial officers, 46, volunteered their Saturday to preside over the hearings.

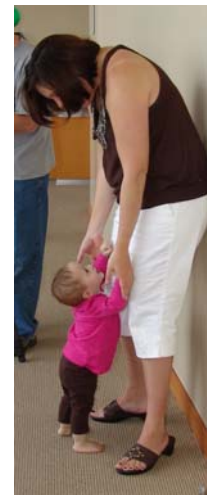
Maricopa County's event is part of National Adoption Day, a nationwide effort to raise awareness that more than 120,000 children need permanent families.



Commissioner Steven Holding presided over the Zoccoli family's adoptions. Michael and Alisa Zoccoli, of Gilbert, adopted three boys on NAD.



Scenes From National Adoption Day



Tax Court

Tax Court Braces for Increase in Cases

Superior Court's Tax Department has a plan in place to gear up for another busy tax year.

According to a report published by Presiding Tax Judge Dean Fink, the number of tax filings is not expected to decline in 2011.

"In attempting to analyze trends in tax filings, it is necessary to consider the effect the current recession has had on the increase in filings and how long current economic conditions will continue," Judge Fink said.

From 2000 to 2008, the number of tax filings remained relatively constant with an average number of 1,041. But during the last two years, Superior Court experienced a 160 percent increase in tax case filings. In 2009, tax cases filings climbed to 1, 989 and in 2010 that number skyrocketed to 3,382.

"The uncertainty of both the economic landscape as well as its impact on Tax Court filings makes it imperative that Tax Court develop plans and strategies to ensure that all Tax Cases can be heard within mandated time frames," Judge Fink said.

In the report, Judge Fink notes that in the second quarter of 2010 new home builders purchased the most new land of any quarter since 2006.

"There is no way to accurately predict if and when these purchases will result in the construction of new housing developments and even more difficult to predict the extent to which it will positively impact the current recession," Judge Fink said.

Expecting a busy 2011 tax calendar, Judge Fink developed a proposal that recommends a modification in the training required of commissioners. The proposal, which has been adopted by the Arizona Supreme Court, will enable additional commissioners to hear small claims tax cases should the need arise. An additional strategy has been implemented which involves returning some small claims tax cases to Pima, Pinal, Mohave and Yavapai County.

To further assist Tax Court, the Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court has granted temporary relief from the requirements of Rule 24, Arizona Tax Rules of Procedure. This rule mandates the resolution of small claims tax cases within six months from filing of the complaint.

In his 2011 proposal, Judge Fink also recommends implementing an e-file process as soon as possible in Tax Court; retaining the services of retired Judges to hear small claims tax cases; utilizing additional commissioners from other court divisions to hear small claims cases and implementing new procedures and resources to accommodate large crowds at the Tax Court filing counter prior to and on the last filing day, December 15.

Lastly, the Tax Court has revised and updated self service forms as well as the Tax Court web page.

These materials may found at: www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/SuperiorCourt/Self-Service_Center/Forms/PropertyTaxCases/tax_txsc1.asp

"I feel these updates were necessary to ensure that litigants have access to all necessary information related to Tax Court," Judge Fink said.

Juvenile Probation

Juvenile Probation Receives Drug Court Grant

On September 2010, Maricopa County Juvenile Probation was notified by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) they had been selected as the recipient of the Juvenile Drug Courts Mentoring and Support Services Initiative Grant.

The total amount awarded was \$300,000 over the course of three years.

The objective of the grant is to build the capacity of service delivery by incorporating the evidence based practice of mentoring services into the Juvenile Drug Court Program. Through the implementation of mentoring services it is expected the existing Juvenile Drug Courts will be able to establish better community support connections, provide more evidence based practices and programs, reduce recidivism and increase the success of the juvenile once they have graduated from Drug Court.

**Submitted by
Kristin Mitchell
Juvenile Probation Drug
Court Supervisor**

Juvenile Probation Receives Grants for Outstanding Warrants

The Juvenile Probation Department (JPD) will receive \$53,918 to fund Juvenile Warrant Apprehension activities as part of a multi-department Arizona Governor's Office Public Safety Stabilization Program, coordinated through the Maricopa County Manager's Office.

JPD will direct program activities toward the apprehension of youth with outstanding warrants, with particular emphasis on those youth that are adjudicated of violent offenses. Funding will support overtime for staff involved in approved warrant apprehension activities through September 30, 2011. The department also received funding from the 2010 Justice Assistance Grant allocation to sustain these program activities after completion of the Governor's Office Public Safety Stabilization Program.

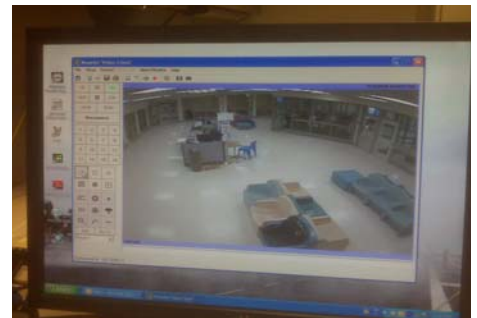
The Governor's office awarded nearly \$10 million in State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF) from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Combined award allocations to Maricopa County totaled \$500,000.

**Submitted by Teresa Tschupp
Management Analyst**

Juvenile Centers Upgrade Camera System

Juvenile Probation recently upgraded their surveillance system at both Juvenile Durango and Juvenile Southeast to enhance the safety of their detained youth and staff.

The new camera system has touch-screen audio recording capability, more capacity for saved images and tinted monitors in control rooms to prevent public viewing.



The Durango detention facility added 51 cameras and the Southeast detention facility added 40 cameras. Locations include the juvenile detention assessment center, visitation areas, living units, classrooms, control rooms, medical clinic lobbies, time out/restraints rooms and receiving docks. Also the shower areas were equipped with new audio monitoring equipment. Additional areas will be assessed for further improvements.

The system upgrades include cameras, digital video recorders, servers, wave readers, touch screen monitors, computers, software, microphones, and matrix integration for cameras.

**Submitted by Michael Czerniejewski
Juvenile Probation**

News and Notes

Juvenile Probation Lends Support During State Fair

While the rides, fried foods and the sounds of children laughing took center stage at the Arizona State Fair, Maricopa County Juvenile Probation and Surveillance Officers along with the Arizona Department of Public Safety worked behind the scenes to ensure public safety.

Probation and Surveillance Officers acted as liaisons during the fair to assist with juveniles that come to the attention of Security and Police. On Fridays and Saturdays during the month long event, probation staff were assisting Department of Public Safety Officers and GITEM Officers (Gang and Immigration Intelligence Team Enforcement Mission – the State Gang Task Force) with tasks like helping to reunite lost children with their families; speaking with juvenile and their families about minor infractions at the fair; making contact with juveniles currently on supervision who were at the fair with permission and dealing with juveniles and their families whose actions led to new criminal charges.

Probation staff being present and interacting with the community in events, like the fair, helps strengthen the Juvenile Probations Mission and Vision of promoting public safety to our youth, families, victims and the community as well as providing supervision to help keep the community safe.

**By Anthony Robles and
Grace Ku
Juvenile Probation**

CCB Lobby Escalator Project to Commence

The Court Tower Project Team is installing an escalator in the lobby of the Central Court Building that will lead court customers to the new Downtown Criminal Court Tower.

Once completed, court customers will ride the escalator to a sky bridge, located on level three of the Central Court Building, connecting to the tower. The project will create continuity between the two buildings and improve the flow of pedestrian traffic.

The project will not interfere with court operations. All work will take place from 6pm to 6am with some work on the weekends. Also, a temporary wall will be constructed to separate construction from the rest of the CCB lobby.

The project is expected to be completed on November 11, 2011.

Judge Gama Named Judge of the Year

Judge J. Richard Gama has been selected by the Phoenix Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates as the 2010 Judge of the Year.

The award recognizes Judge Gama's "integrity, dedication and professionalism." It will be presented to him on December 4 at a dinner in Phoenix.

Other Superior Court Judges to be honored with ABOTA's "Judge of the Year" award include: Judge Gary Donahoe, former Superior Court and current Court of Appeals Judge Margaret Downie and retired Judges Barry Schneider and Robert Gottsfeld.

ABOTA's mission includes promoting the efficient administration of justice and constant improvement of the law.

November Employee Anniversaries

5 Years

Dorece Patterson Juvenile Detention Officer
Brady Hammer Surveillance Officer
Maria del Rocio Korb Court Interpreter
Jerry Xu Web Designer/Developer - Sr/Ld
Sandra Feijoo-Negron Court Interpreter
Maria Alcazar General Laborer
Justin Lauridsen Judicial Clerk Associate
Sandra Mena Judicial Staff Trainer/Coord
Jennifer Vidlak Human Resources Support Supv

20 Years

Richard Kokes Juvenile Probation Ofcr Supv
Kimberly Barnes Adult Probation Officer
Margarita Dominguez Adult Probation Officer
Tracy Medrano Adult Probation Officer
Karen Arra Media Relations

10 Years

Maria Reynolds Adult Probation Officer
Barbara Broderick Chief Adult Prob Ofcr
Heather McFarland Judicial Specialist
Gloria Carson Juvenile Detention Officer
Gabriel Velasco Adult Probation Officer
Diana Clarke Attorney
Cindy Benner Court Reporter
Kasuma Gossett Juvenile Probation Officer
Richard Napoli Web Designer/Developer

25 Years

Kyla Strader Presentence Screener
Derrick Knott Adult Probation Officer

30+ Years

Mary Farmer Judicial Assistant

15 Years

Mary Martinez Judicial Financial Clerk
Jenifer Meiley Adult Probation Division Mngr
Rona Easterday Juvenile Probation Officer
Jessica Doney Juvenile Probation Officer
Curt McConnell Accountant
Daneile Grasser Juvenile Probation Officer

News and Notes

Maricopa County Celebrates Native American Heritage

A celebration recognizing the contributions of Native Americans was sponsored by the Maricopa County Diversity Office on November 5th in the Board of Supervisors Auditorium. Several guest speakers presented their stories of Native American history and culture. The Maricopa County Color Guard, comprised of Judicial Branch employees who served in our Armed Forces, were present to post and retire the American and Arizona flags.



Pictured left to right are keynote speaker Mary Lee Madison, Dolores Ceballos, Maricopa County Diversity Director Ed Guerrero, Bernadette Munoz (Vice-Chair Maricopa County Indigenous Circle), Cher Thomas (Ms. Indian ASU), George Garcia (previous Maricopa County Diversity Director), Jennifer Nasewytewa (Chairperson Maricopa County Indigenous Circle), Jenna Lamson (Miss Hopi First Attendant), Johnetta Honie (Miss Hopi 2010-2011), Court Security Officer Jose Zazueta (US Marine Reserves), Court Security Officer Jesse Vargas (US Marine Reserves), Employee Relations Administrator Gary Bridget (USAF Retired), and Adult Probation Officer Arni Cook (US Army Reserves – not pictured).

Submitted By Gary Bridget
Human Resources

Family Court Judge Honored by Group

The Arizona Family Support Council recognized Judge Bruce Cohen as its 2010 Judge of the year.



Bruce Cohen

Judge Cohen received the award for his significant impact in the area of child support and employing innovative methods to efficiently and fairly adjudicate child support cases.

Court Administrator Earns PhD

On November 4, Chris Bleuenstein, Deputy Criminal Court Administrator, received his PhD from **Walden University** in Minneapolis, MN.

Bleuenstein earned a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences in the School of Public Policy and Administration.

Bleuenstein's Dissertation was entitled: *The Effects of Satisfaction on the Legitimacy of Courts: A Case Study of Diffuse Support Among Hispanics/Latinos in Maricopa County, Arizona*

Submitted by Paula Collins
Criminal Administration

Courtside

Photo Highlights



Superior Court Judge **Alfred Fenzel** was interviewed by a New York producer from the show "On the Case with Paula Zahn." The show will air sometime in 2011.



Human Resources Payroll team takes part in the Maricopa County's Charitable Campaign Wellness Competition. Left to right - **Valerie Quintana, Sharon McCammond, Mikisha Steel, Brad Finch and Orlanda Carr**



Left to Right - Angela Maddox, IA Court, Jill Siller, RCC Downtown and Susan Thomas administer Superior Court's Courtools Survey outside of the 4th Avenue Jail.

Superior Court had several teams compete in the Maricopa County's Charitable Campaign Wellness Competition. The teams included groups from Human Resources, the Court Interpreter's Office and the Law Library.

The events consisted of walking a half mile, climbing five flights of stairs up and down, an agility test and a golf putt.